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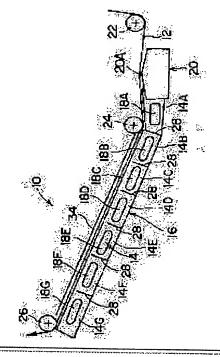
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(54) METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DRYING COATED FILM

(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To uniformly dry a coated film without changing physical properties such as viscosity of a coating liquid and the like and a kind of a solvent. SOLUTION: A drying zone 14 is provided just after coating, a wind which is not uniform in intensity and direction from outside the drying zone 14 is prevented from directly touching a surface of the coated film, and dry environment wherein an organic solvent evaporated from the surface of the coated film covers the surface of the coated surface, is generated. Then, under the dry environment, a regular dry wind of one direction flow flowing from one edge of a width direction of a web 12 to the other edge is generated in the dry zone 14.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to the desiccation approach of the spreading film, and equipment, and relates to the desiccation approach and equipment which dry a double width spreading film surface in manufacture of an optical compensation sheet etc. especially by the long picture which applied and formed the coating liquid which contains an organic solvent in a long picture-like base material.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] In order to improve an angle-of-visibility property in a liquid crystal display, the optical compensation sheet is prepared as a phase contrast plate between the polarizing plate of a couple, and the liquid crystal cell. The manufacturing method of a long picture-like optical compensation sheet is indicated by JP,9-73081,A, after applying the coating liquid containing the resin for orientation film formation to the front face of a long picture-like bright film, rubbing processing is performed, the orientation film is formed, the coating liquid which contains a liquid crystallinity discotheque compound on the orientation film is applied, and the approach of drying the applied spreading film is indicated.

[0003] The desiccation approach of the coating liquid containing the liquid crystallinity discotheque compound currently indicated by JP,9-73081,A performs initial desiccation under indoor air conditioning conditions, and he is trying to mainly evaporate the organic solvent in coating liquid after applying the coating liquid containing a liquid crystallinity discotheque compound on this orientation film until it dries with the dryer of normal.

[0004] two kinds of spots (nonuniformity), the broadcloth spots A (a thin line show) as shown in the desiccation process at <u>drawing 4</u> on the 1st page of a spreading film, and the sharp spots B (a thick line show), A and B occur on the optical compensation sheet manufactured by this approach, and there be a problem of lower the yield of a product by the case in it.

[0005] As a result of analyzing about two kinds of these spots A and B, it turned out that the thickness of the layer of the coating liquid film 2 with which the broadcloth spots A contain a liquid crystallinity discotheque compound as shown in <u>drawing 5</u> is thin. The sign 3 of <u>drawing 5</u> is a long picture-like base material, and 4 is an orientation membrane layer. As the direction 6 of orientation of the orientation section 5 (dark color part) which the sharp spots B have generated on the other hand was shown in <u>drawing 6</u>, it turned out that it has shifted compared with the orientation section 8 of other normal directions 7 of orientation.

[0006] To the spots (nonuniformity) A and B generated in such initial desiccation, as an approach currently generally performed as an effective cure, the viscosity of coating liquid is made to increase by high-concentration-izing coating liquid or adding a thickener, and there is a method of preventing generating of spots by controlling floating which, and is depended by this. [the spreading film surface immediately after spreading] [of desiccation] As an option, by using a high-boiling point solvent, even if floating of the paint film side immediately after spreading depended in the style of desiccation occurs,

there is a method of preventing generating of spots because the leveling effectiveness arises. [0007]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] However, the approach of increasing the viscosity of coating liquid by high-concentration-izing concentration of coating liquid, or adding a thickener has the fault that super-thin layer precision spreading which forms the overly thin layer spreading film by high-speed spreading cannot be performed. Moreover, since a marginal spreading rate (limitation of the spreading rate which can carry out stable spreading) falls so that coating liquid viscosity increases and high-speed spreading becomes impossible with the increment in viscosity, there is a fault that productive efficiency gets worse extremely.

[0008] On the other hand, the approach using a high-boiling point solvent brings about buildup of the drying time, and buildup of the amount of residual solvents which remains in the spreading film, and since the drying time starts so much, it has the fault that productive efficiency gets worse.

[0009] This invention was made in view of such a situation, and it aims at offering the desiccation approach and equipment which can dry the spreading film to homogeneity, without changing the class

of physical properties, such as viscosity of coating liquid, or solvent.

[0010]

[Means for Solving the Problem] This invention prepares a desiccation zone immediately after said spreading in the desiccation approach of the spreading film which applied and formed the coating liquid which contains an organic solvent in the long-picture-like base material it runs in order to attain said object, and it is characterized by to make said desiccation zone generate the desiccation wind of one direction flow of said long-picture-like base material cross direction which flows from one end to another side one end on the other hand while it surrounds the spreading film surface by which said long-picture-like base material it runs is dried.

[0011] Moreover, this invention is set to the dryer of the spreading film which applied and formed the coating liquid which contains an organic solvent in the long picture-like base material it runs with a spreading machine, in order to attain said object. The body of a dryer which forms the desiccation zone surrounding the spreading film surface by which it is prepared immediately after said spreading machine, and said long picture-like base material it runs is dried, It is characterized by having an one direction air-current generating means to generate the desiccation wind of one direction flow of said long picture-like base material cross direction which flows from one end to another side one end on the other hand, in said desiccation zone.

[0012] According to this invention, after spreading, it is having prepared the desiccation zone immediately after spreading preferably, and while being able to prevent the uneven wind of the strength from the outside of a desiccation zone, or a direction from hitting the spreading film surface in the condition that hidden coating liquid tends to flow an organic solvent mostly, a wrap desiccation environment is formed for the organic solvent which evaporated from the spreading film surface in a spreading film surface. Under this desiccation environment, since the spreading film can be dried where the organic solvent concentration near the spreading film surface is always maintained uniformly if the regular desiccation wind of 1 direction flow of the long picture-like base material cross direction which flows at an another side edge from an edge on the other hand is generated, the above-mentioned generating of two kinds of spots (nonuniformity) at the time of desiccation can be prevented, and uniform desiccation can be performed.

[0013]

[Embodiment of the Invention] Hereafter, it explains in full detail by the accompanying drawing about the desiccation approach of the spreading film of this invention, and the gestalt of desirable operation of equipment.

[0014] <u>Drawing 1</u> is the side elevation of the dryer of the spreading film of this invention, and <u>drawing 2</u> is the top view which looked at <u>drawing 1</u> from the upper part.

[0015] As shown in <u>drawing 1</u> and <u>drawing 2</u>, on the other hand, the dryer 10 of the spreading film of this invention is constituted by one direction air-current generating means 18 generate the desiccation wind of the 1 direction flow of the web 12 cross direction which flows from one end to another side one

end, the body 16 of a dryer which forms the desiccation zone 14 where the long picture-like base material 12 (henceforth "a web 12") it runs is passed, and desiccation of the spreading film is performed, and mainly in the desiccation zone 14. This dryer 10 is formed immediately after the spreading machine 20 which applies the coating liquid which contains an organic solvent in the web 12 it runs. [0016] Coating liquid is applied to the underside of the web 12 can use the bar coater equipped with wire bar 20A as a spreading machine 20, for example, and it runs by being supported by two or more backup rollers 22, 24, and 26, and the spreading film is formed in it.

[0017] the merit who the body 16 of a dryer was established immediately after the spreading machine 20, and met the spreading film surface side (underside side of a web) of the web 12 it runs -- it is formed in the shape of [square] a box, and the side by the side of the spreading film surface of each side of a box (top chord of a box) is excised. The desiccation zone 14 surrounding the spreading film surface by which the web 12 it runs is dried by this is formed. The desiccation zone 14 is divided into two or more division zones 14A, 14B, 14C, 14D, 14E, 14F, and 14G (this example seven division zones) by dividing the body 16 of a dryer with two or more dashboards 28 and 28 -- which intersected perpendicularly in the transit direction of a web 12. In this case, the range of 0.5mm - 12mm is desirable still more desirable, and the range of the distance of the upper bed of a dashboard 28 which divides the desiccation zone 14, and the spreading film surface formed in the web 12 is 1mm - 10mm. Moreover, the one direction air-current generating means 18 (R> drawing 2 2 reference) is formed in the desiccation zone 14.

[0018] The inlet port 18A, 18B, 18C, 18D, 18E, 18F, and 18G by which the one direction air-current generating means 18 was mainly formed in the one side of the both-sides side of the body 16 of a dryer, It consists of exhaust ports 18H, 18I, 18J, 18K, 18L, 18M, and 18N which countered inlet port 18A-18G, and were formed in the other side, and exhaust air means 18P, 18Q, 18R, 18S, 18T, 18U, and 18W connected to exhaust ports 18H-18N. Since the air absorbed by the division zones 14A-14G from inlet port 18A-18G by this by making the exhaust air means 18P-18W drive is exhausted from exhaust ports 18H-18N, in each division zones 14A-14G, the desiccation wind of the web 12 cross direction which flows from one end (inlet port side) to an one direction towards another side one end (exhaust-port side) on the other hand occurs. this one direction air-current generating means 18 -- the exhaust air means 18P-18W -- the division zones 14A-14 -- displacement can be separately controlled now for every G. The air conditioning wind which is absorbed from inlet port 18A-18G and by which temperature and humidity were air-conditioned if the style of desiccation is desirable.

[0019] Moreover, the width of face of the body 16 of a dryer is formed so that it may become larger than the width of face of a web 12, and the ready wind part which covered the open part of the both sides of the desiccation zone 14 with the air register board 32 was prepared. This ready wind part is carried out that it is easy to absorb in the exhaust-port 18 Mika desiccation zone 14 whose desiccation wind is inlet port 18A-18G while securing the distance to H-18N from the distance and the spreading membrane end from inlet port 18A-18G to a spreading membrane end, and it is made not to make the rapid flow of the desiccation style in the desiccation zone 14. As die length of this ready wind part 32, i.e., an air register board, the inlet port and exhaust-port side of the range of 50mm or more 150mm or less is desirable. [0020] It is important for division zone 14A nearest to especially a spreading machine among each division zones 14A-14G to make it hard to enter the desiccation zone 14 immediately after applying coating liquid to a web 12, the fresh air, for example, above-mentioned air conditioning wind, outside the desiccation zone 14. For that, it is desirable to constitute the open section of division zone 14A from a web 12 so that it may cover as the location of wire bar 20A of the spreading machine 20 and the location of a backup roller 24 other than arranging division zone 14A or the above mentioned air register board 32 are adjusted so that the spreading machine 20 may be adjoined, and a web 12 runs the latest of division zone 14A.

[0021] Moreover, a web 12 is inserted, and a shield 34 is formed in the opposite hand location of the body 16 of a dryer so that stable transit of a web 12 may not be checked by winds, such as said air conditioning wind.

[0022] Next, an operation of the constituted dryer 10 is explained like the above.

[0023] In addition, a web 12 explains coating liquid in the example of the organic solvent nature coating liquid containing a liquid crystallinity discotheque compound while having the layer which carries out rubbing processing of the resin for orientation film formation applied beforehand, and serves as orientation film.

[0024] Initial desiccation of a spreading film surface is performed by the dryer 10 immediately after applying coating liquid to the web 12 it runs by being supported by backup rollers 22, 24, and 26 by wire bar 20A of the spreading machine 20. As for this initial desiccation, it is desirable to start the desiccation depended in the style of desiccation immediately after spreading for less than 5 seconds at the latest immediately after spreading.

[0025] In this initial desiccation, the spreading film surface immediately after spreading is in the condition that the organic solvent was fully contained, and temperature distribution generate it in a spreading film surface according to distribution (fluctuation) of evaporation of an organic solvent in initial desiccation immediately after applying the coating liquid which uses especially an organic solvent as a solvent. Distribution of surface tension occurs owing to this, floating of coating liquid occurs within a spreading film surface, and the spreading film of the late part of desiccation becomes thin, and serves as the broadcloth spots (nonuniformity) A.

[0026] moreover, although the direction of orientation of a liquid crystallinity discotheque compound carried out rubbing processing and have determine the front face of the resin for orientation film formation, when the wind speed of a different wind from the direction of rubbing in initial desiccation be quick and a wind join, it make a part of spreading film surface produce a gap of the direction of orientation because winds when the eddy of a wind have occur hit a spreading film surface, and cause spots (nonuniformity) B with this sharp.

[0027] While preventing that the uneven wind from the outside until floating of the paint film liquid in a spreading film surface stops hits a spreading film surface during initial desiccation after applying in order to prevent the spots (nonuniformity) A and B of the spreading film surface at the time of initial desiccation from this, it becomes important to always keep constant the organic solvent concentration near the spreading film surface.

[0028] So, in this invention, immediately after applying coating liquid to a web 12, in order to perform initial desiccation, the dryer 10 of the above-mentioned configuration was formed. That is, the uneven wind of the strength outside the desiccation zone 14 or a direction can be prevented from hitting the spreading film surface in the condition that hidden coating liquid tends to flow mostly, in an organic solvent by having formed the desiccation zone 14 immediately after spreading. That the direction of orientation of a spreading film surface shifts by this under the influence of the wind which hit the spreading film surface can prevent the sharp spots (nonuniformity) B generated owing to, and it can perform uniform desiccation.

[0029] Moreover, a wrap desiccation environment is formed for the organic solvent which evaporated from the spreading film surface in a spreading film surface by having formed the desiccation zone 14. If the exhaust air means 18P-18W are made to drive, since the air absorbed by the division zones 14A-14G from inlet port 18A-18G will be exhausted from exhaust ports 18H-18N under this desiccation environment, in each division zones 14A-14G, the desiccation wind of the web width direction which flows from one end (inlet port side) to an one direction towards another side one end (exhaust-port side) on the other hand occurs. Thereby, with the condition that the spreading film surface was covered by the organic solvent, the desiccation air containing the organic solvent which evaporated is exhausted from exhaust ports 18H-18N, and is dried gradually. In this case, since an organic solvent stops covering a spreading film surface uniformly when the displacement of the exhaust air means 18P-18W is too large, the displacement of the exhaust air means 18P-18W is adjusted, and it is necessary to make it displacement not become large too much. Thereby, since organic solvent concentration [/ near the spreading film surface] can be equalized, an organic solvent can be uniformly evaporated from each part of a spreading film surface. Therefore, evaporation distribution of the organic solvent from a spreading film surface can prevent the broadcloth spots (nonuniformity) A generated owing to, and can perform uniform desiccation.

[0030] In this case, although the organic solvent concentration near [in the entrance side and outlet side of the desiccation zone 14] the spreading film surface may differ to a web 12 running the desiccation zone 14, the desiccation zone 14 is cancelable by having divided into two or more division zones 14A-14G. That is, the difference in the organic solvent concentration near [in the entrance side and outlet side of the desiccation zone 14] the spreading film surface is cancelable by controlling the displacement of each exhaust air means 18P-18W formed in each division zones 14A-14G divided into seven, and adjusting the wind speed of the desiccation style which flows each division zones 14A-14G. Thereby, good desiccation which generates neither the broadcloth spots (nonuniformity) A nor the sharp spots (nonuniformity) B can be performed to a spreading film surface.

[0031] Furthermore, each exhaust air precision of each exhaust air means 18P-18W formed in each division zones 14A-14G can be made to raise by setting spacing of the upper bed of a dashboard 28, and a spreading film surface to 0.5mm - 12mm, in order to control the flow of the desiccation style, and making it as narrow as possible in the range in which a spreading film surface does not hit a dashboard 28. Moreover, it was made for the flow of the wind containing the solvent which flows a spreading film surface by rectifying the wind which forms an air register board 32 and flows into the bottom of the web of the both-sides section of the desiccation zone 14 from inlet port 18A-18G, and the wind exhausted from exhaust ports 18H-18N to become uniform. In addition, although the dryer 10 was installed, for example, air conditioning winds, such as an air conditioned room, can be used if the style of desiccation, you may make it inhale the wind containing the same solvent as the organic solvent contained in coating liquid from the inlet port 18A-18G of the body 16 of a dryer. Or the part of the desiccation style exhausted by the exhaust air means 18P-18W may be inhaled from inlet port 18A-18G.

[0032] Generally as a web 12 used by this invention, width of face 0.3-5m, die length 45-10000m, Polyethylene terephthalate with a thickness of 5-200 micrometers, polyethylene -2, 6 naphthalate, Cellulose die acetate, cellulose triacetate, cellulose acetate propionate, A polyvinyl chloride, a

polyvinylidene chloride, a polycarbonate, polyimide, Plastic films, such as a polyamide, paper, polyethylene, polypropylene, The thing which made the preliminary processing layer form in the front face of band-like or base materials, such as metallic foils, such as paper in which the carbon number of an ethylene butene copolymer etc. applied or laminated alpha-polyolefines of 2-10, aluminum, copper, and tin, is contained. Furthermore, after optical compensation sheet coating liquid, magnetic coating liquid, photograph photosensitivity coating liquid, a surface protection, electrification prevention, or the coating liquid for slippage is applied to the front face and dried by the above mentioned web 12, what is judged by the die length and width of face for which it asks is contained in it, and an optical compensation sheet, various photographic films, photographic paper, a magnetic tape, etc. are mentioned to it as these examples of representation.

[0033] As the method of application of coating liquid, the others and curtain coating method, an extrusion coating method, the roll coating method, a DIP coating method, a spin coating method, a printing coating method, a spray coating method, and a slide coating method can be used. [coating method / above-mentioned / bar] A bar coating method, an extrusion coating method, and a slide coating method can use it suitably especially.

[0034] Moreover, the number of the spreading layers of the coating liquid simultaneously applied in this invention is not limited to a monolayer, and can be applied also to the simultaneous multilayer method of application if needed.

[0035]

[Example] <u>Drawing 3</u> built the dryer 10 of this invention into the production process of an optical compensation sheet, and investigated the effectiveness at the time of adjusting the displacement of each exhaust air means 18P-18W of a dryer 10 by relation with the generating situation of the spots (nonuniformity) of the manufactured optical compensation sheet.

[0036] About the displacement of each exhaust air means 18P-18W of a dryer 10, it carried out about three examples of 1-3 of a table 1, and the wind speed of the desiccation style which flows each division zones 14A-14G in each example was shown in a table 1.

[0037] First, if the production process of an optical compensation sheet is explained, being supported by

two or more guide idlers 42 and 42 --, the web 12 sent out with the sending-out machine 40 like <u>drawing 3</u> will pass the rubbing processor 44, the spreading machine 20 and the dryer 10 of this invention which performs initial desiccation, the desiccation zone 46 that performs this desiccation, the heating zone 48, and an ultraviolet ray lamp 50, and will be rolled round with a reel 52.

[0038] As a web 12, triacetyl cellulose (FUJITAKKU, Fuji Photo Film Co., Ltd. make) with a thickness of 100 micrometers was used. And it is the amount percent solution of duplexs of long-chain alkyl denaturation poval (MP-203, Kuraray Co., Ltd. make) to the front face of a web 12 Film 1m2 After 25ml spreading of hits, carrying out conveyance transit of the web 12 in which the resin layer for orientation film which was dried for 1 minute and built with 60-degreeC was formed, by part for 18m/, rubbing processing was performed on the resin layer front face, and the orientation film was formed in it. For the forcing pressure of the rubbing roller 54 in rubbing processing, an orientation film resin layer is 2 1cm. While considering as 98Pa (10 k gf/cm2) of hits, revolution peripheral speed was carried out in 5.0m/second.

[0039] And as coating liquid, the coating liquid containing the liquid crystallinity compound which uses a photopolymerization initiator (the IRUGA cure 907, Ciba-Geigy Japan manufacture) as the 40-% of the weight methyl-ethyl-ketone solution of the mixture added one percent by weight to said mixture was used for the mixture of 4:1 by the weight ratio of (5) of (3) of discotheque compound TE-8, and TE-8 on the orientation film obtained by carrying out rubbing processing of the resin layer for orientation film. The amount of coating liquid is this coating liquid on the orientation film, making it run a web 12 by part for travel-speed/of 18m Web 1m2 It applied by wire bar 20A so that it might become 5ml of hits. And initial desiccation was performed immediately after spreading using the dryer 10 of this invention. [0040] Moreover, the desiccation zone 14 was set as the range of 5-9mm, and spacing of the upper bed of the dashboard 28 divided into seven and a spreading film surface performed it. Moreover, the web 12 dried with the dryer 10 of this invention the first stage irradiated ultraviolet rays with the ultraviolet ray lamp 50 on the front face of a liquid crystal layer, carrying out continuation conveyance of the web 12 to which this orientation film and a liquid crystallinity compound were applied, after passing the desiccation zone 46 adjusted to 100-degreeC, and the heating zone 48 adjusted to 130-degreeC and forming a nematic phase.

[0041] In addition, in the generating situation of spots of a table 1, it is shown that spots generated x and it is shown that spots did not generate O. [0042]

 table	17
 Janie	

条件	各分割ゾーンの乾燥風の風速(m/秒)						斑の発生状況		
	14A	14B	14C	14D	14E	14F	14G	ブロード斑	シャープ斑
1	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	×	0
2	1.0	1. 5	0. 5	0.5	0. 5	0, 5	0. 5	0	0
3	1. 0	1. 5	0. 5	0. 5	2. 0	2. 0	2. 0	×	×

Consequently, as shown in a table 1, in the example 1 which carried out all the wind speeds of each division zone in the 0.5 samem/second, the broadcloth spots A occurred and the Sharp spots B were not generated. Moreover, the example 2 which carried out the wind speed of division zone 14B of 1.0m /and a degree for the wind speed of division zone 14A near the spreading machine 20 in 1.5m/second a second, and carried out the wind speed of the division zones 14C-14G after it in 0.5m/second did not

generate the broadcloth spots A and the Sharp spots B, but was a good result. Moreover, the example 3 which carried out the wind speed of division zone 14B of 1.0m/and a degree for the wind speed of division zone 14A in 1.5m/second a second, carried out the wind speed of division zone 14C and D in 0.5m/second, and was set to division zone 14E, and F and G generated the broadcloth spots A and the Sharp spots B, and was the worst result.

[0043] Thus, in order to control the spots (nonuniformity) generated in an initial desiccation process, it turned out that it is effective to divide a desiccation zone and to set it as the optimal wind speed with each exhaust air means while installing a dryer 10 immediately after spreading.

[Effect of the Invention] As explained above, according to the desiccation approach of the spreading film of this invention, and equipment, the spots (nonuniformity) generated in the initial desiccation process immediately after spreading can be controlled, and uniform desiccation can be performed. Therefore, like before, since it is not necessary to change the class of physical properties, such as viscosity of coating liquid, or solvent, the width of face of the class of coating liquid and the width of face of the class of solvent which can be used can be expanded.

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TECHNICAL FIELD

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to the desiccation approach of the spreading film, and equipment, and relates to the desiccation approach and equipment which dry a double width spreading film surface in manufacture of an optical compensation sheet etc. especially by the long picture which applied and formed the coating liquid which contains an organic solvent in a long picture-like base material.

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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] The desiccation approach of the spreading film characterized by to prepare a desiccation zone immediately after said spreading, and to make said desiccation zone generate the desiccation wind of one direction flow of said long-picture-like base material cross direction which flows from one end to another side one end on the other hand in the desiccation approach of the spreading film which applied and formed the coating liquid which contains an organic solvent in the long-picture-like base material it runs while surrounding the spreading film surface by which said long-picture-like base material it runs is dried.

[Claim 2] The desiccation approach of the spreading film according to claim 1 characterized by adjusting the wind speed of the desiccation style which flows to said one direction for each [which divided and divided said desiccation zone into two or more division zones in the transit direction of said long picture-like base material] division zone of every.

[Claim 3] Said desiccation wind is the desiccation approach of the spreading film according to claim 1 or 2 characterized by including the same solvent gas as said organic solvent.

[Claim 4] It is the desiccation approach of the spreading film of any 1 of claims 1-3 characterized by being that in which said coating liquid contains a liquid crystallinity discotheque compound while having the layer which said long picture-like base material carries out rubbing processing of the resin for orientation film formation applied beforehand, and serves as orientation film.

[Claim 5] In the dryer of the spreading film which applied and formed the coating liquid which contains an organic solvent in the long picture-like base material it runs with a spreading machine The body of a dryer which forms the desiccation zone surrounding the spreading film surface by which it is prepared immediately after said spreading machine, and said long picture-like base material it runs is dried, The dryer of the spreading film characterized by having an one direction air-current generating means to generate the desiccation wind of one direction flow of said long picture-like base material cross direction which flows from one end to another side one end on the other hand, in said desiccation zone. [Claim 6] Said one direction air-current generating means is the dryer of the spreading film of claim 5 which is formed in the side face of said body of a dryer, and is characterized by having the exhaust air means connected to said opening formed in one end and said another side one end on the other hand, respectively and said another side one end opening of said long picture-like base material cross direction.

[Claim 7] It is the dryer of the spreading film according to claim 5 or 6 characterized by making controllable displacement of an one direction each air-current generating means according to an individual while a batch forms two or more division zones with the dashboard which intersects said desiccation zone perpendicularly in the transit direction of said long picture-like base material and establishing said one direction air-current generating means for every division zone.

[Claim 8] Spacing of the upper bed of said dashboard arranged in this desiccation zone while said desiccation zone was formed so that the field of said spreading film might be surrounded, and said spreading film surface is the dryer of the spreading film of claim 7 characterized by being set as the

range of 0.5-12mm.

[Claim 9] It is the dryer of the spreading film of any 1 publication of claims 6-8 characterized by absorbing the desiccation wind containing said solvent gas as said organic solvent from one end opening of said desiccation zone same on the other hand.

[Claim 10] It is the dryer of the spreading film of any 1 publication of claims 5-9 characterized by being that in which said coating liquid contains a liquid crystallinity discotheque compound while having the layer which said long picture-like base material carries out rubbing processing of the resin for orientation film formation applied beforehand, and serves as orientation film.

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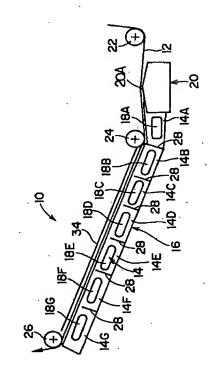
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(54) 【発明の名称】 強布膜の乾燥方法及び装置

(57)【要約】

【課題】<u>塗布液の粘度等の物性や溶媒の種類を変更する</u> <u>ことなく塗布膜を均一に乾燥できる。</u>

【解決手段】塗布直後に乾燥ゾーン14を設け、乾燥ゾーン14外からの強さや方向の不均一な風が塗布膜面に直接当たらないようにし、塗布膜面から蒸発した有機溶剤が塗布膜面を覆う乾燥環境が形成される。そして、この乾燥環境下で、乾燥ゾーン14にウエブ12幅方向の一方端から他方端に流れる1方向流れの規則的な乾燥風を発生させる。



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【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】走行する長尺状支持体に有機溶剤を含む塗 布液を塗布して形成した塗布膜の乾燥方法において、

前記塗布直後に乾燥ゾーンを設けて、前記走行する長尺 状支持体の乾燥される塗布膜面を囲むと共に前記乾燥ゾ ーンに前記長尺状支持体幅方向の一方端側から他方端側 に流れる一方向流れの乾燥風を発生させたことを特徴と する塗布膜の乾燥方法。

【請求項2】前記乾燥ゾーンを前記長尺状支持体の走行 方向において複数の分割ゾーンに分割し、分割した各分 10 割ゾーンどとに前記一方向に流れる乾燥風の風速を調整 することを特徴とする請求項1に記載の塗布膜の乾燥方

【請求項3】前記乾燥風は、前記有機溶剤と同一の溶剤 ガスを含むことを特徴とする請求項1又は2に記載の塗 布膜の乾燥方法。

【請求項4】前記長尺状支持体は、予め塗布された配向 膜形成用樹脂をラビング処理して配向膜となる層を有す るものであると共に、前記塗布液は液晶性ディスコティ ック化合物を含むものであることを特徴とする請求項1 ~3の何れか1の塗布膜の乾燥方法。

【請求項5】走行する長尺状支持体に塗布機により有機 溶剤を含む塗布液を塗布して形成した塗布膜の乾燥装置 において、

前記塗布機の直後に設けられ、前記走行する長尺状支持 体の乾燥される塗布膜面を囲む乾燥ゾーンを形成する乾 燥装置本体と、

前記乾燥ゾーン内に前記長尺状支持体幅方向の一方端側 から他方端側に流れる一方向流れの乾燥風を発生させる 一方向気流発生手段と、

を備えたことを特徴とする塗布膜の乾燥装置。

【請求項6】前記一方向気流発生手段は、

前記乾燥装置本体の側面に形成され、前記長尺状支持体 幅方向の前記一方端側と前記他方端側にそれぞれ形成さ れた開口部と、

前記他方端側開口部に接続された排気手段と、

を備えたことを特徴とする請求項5の塗布膜の乾燥装 置。

【請求項7】前記乾燥ゾーンを、前記長尺状支持体の走 行方向に直交する仕切板で仕切って複数の分割ゾーンを 形成し、各分割ゾーンどとに前記一方向気流発生手段を 設けると共に、各一方向気流発生手段の排気量を個別に 制御可能としたことを特徴とする請求項5又は6記載の 塗布膜の乾燥装置。

【請求項8】前記乾燥ゾーンは、前記塗布膜の面を囲む ように形成されると共に、該乾燥ゾーンに配設された前 記仕切板の上端と前記塗布膜面との間隔は0.5~12 mmの範囲に設定されていることを特徴とする請求項7 の塗布膜の乾燥装置。

は前記有機溶剤と同一の溶剤ガスを含む乾燥風が吸い込 まれることを特徴とする請求項6~8の何れか1記載の 塗布膜の乾燥装置。

【請求項10】前記長尺状支持体は、予め塗布された配 向膜形成用樹脂をラビング処理して配向膜となる層を有 するものであると共に、前記塗布液は液晶性ディスコテ ィック化合物を含むものであることを特徴とする請求項 5~9の何れか1記載の塗布膜の乾燥装置。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明は塗布膜の乾燥方法及 び装置に係り、特に、光学補償シート等の製造におい て、長尺状支持体に有機溶剤を含む塗布液を塗布して形 成した長尺で広幅な塗布膜面を乾燥する乾燥方法及び装 置に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】液晶表示装置において視野角特性を改善 するために、一対の偏光板と液晶セルとの間に位相差板 として光学補償シートを設けている。長尺状の光学補償 シートの製造法は特開平9-73081号公報に開示さ 20 れており、長尺状の透明フィルムの表面に配向膜形成用 樹脂を含む塗布液を塗布してからラビング処理を行なっ て配向膜を形成し、その配向膜の上に液晶性ディスコテ ィック化合物を含む塗布液を塗布し、塗布した塗布膜を 乾燥する方法が開示されている。

【0003】特開平9-73081号公報に開示されて いる液晶性ディスコティック化合物を含む塗布液の乾燥 方法は、該配向膜上に液晶性ディスコティック化合物を 含む塗布液を塗布してから正規の乾燥装置で乾燥するま 30 で室内空調条件下で初期乾燥を行なって主として塗布液 中の有機溶剤を蒸発させるようにしている。

【0004】この方法で製造された光学補償シートに は、塗布膜1面上に乾燥過程において、図4に示したよ うなブロードな斑A(細い線で示す)とシャープな斑B (太い線で示す)の2種類の斑 (ムラ)A、Bが発生 し、場合によって製品の得率を下げるという問題があ る。

【0005】との2種類の斑A、Bについて解析を行な った結果、ブロードな斑Aは図5に示すように液晶性デ ィスコティック化合物を含む塗布液膜2の層の厚みが薄 くなっていることが分かった。図5の符号3は長尺状支 持体、4は配向膜層である。一方、シャープな斑Bが発 生している配向部5 (濃色部)の配向方向6は、図6に 示すように、他の正常な配向方向7の配向部8と比べて ずれていることが分かった。

【0006】 このような初期乾燥で発生する斑 (ムラ) A、Bに対して、有効な対策として一般的に行なわれて いる方法としては、塗布液を高濃度化したり、増粘剤を 添加したりすることで塗布液の粘度を増加させ、これに 【請求項9】前記乾燥ゾーンの前記一方端側開口部から 50 より、塗布直後の塗布膜面の乾燥風による流動を抑制す

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ることで斑の発生を防止する方法がある。別の方法とし ては、高沸点溶媒を用いることにより、塗布直後の塗膜 面の乾燥風による流動が発生してもレベリング効果が生 じることで斑の発生を防止する方法がある。

[0007]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】しかしながら、塗布液 の濃度を高濃度化したり、増粘剤を添加したりすること で塗布液の粘度を増加する方法は、高速塗布により超薄 層な塗布膜を形成する超薄層精密塗布を行なうことがで きないという欠点がある。また、塗布液粘度が増加する ほど限界塗布速度(安定塗布できる塗布速度の限界)が 低下するので、粘度の増加と共に高速塗布が不可能にな るので、生産効率が極端に悪化するという欠点がある。 【0008】一方、高沸点溶媒を用いる方法は、乾燥時 間の増大、及び塗布膜中に残留する残留溶剤量の増大を もたらし、それだけ乾燥時間がかかるので生産効率が悪 化するという欠点がある。

【0009】本発明は、このような事情に鑑みてなされ たもので、塗布液の粘度等の物性や溶媒の種類を変更す ることなく塗布膜を均一に乾燥できる乾燥方法及び装置 20 を提供することを目的とする。

[0010]

【課題を解決するための手段】本発明は、前記目的を達 成するために、走行する長尺状支持体に有機溶剤を含む 塗布液を塗布して形成した塗布膜の乾燥方法において、 前記塗布直後に乾燥ゾーンを設けて、前記走行する長尺 状支持体の乾燥される塗布膜面を囲むと共に前記乾燥ゾ ーンに前記長尺状支持体幅方向の一方端側から他方端側 に流れる一方向流れの乾燥風を発生させたことを特徴と する。

【0011】また、本発明は、前記目的を達成するため に、走行する長尺状支持体に塗布機により有機溶剤を含 む塗布液を塗布して形成した塗布膜の乾燥装置におい て、前記塗布機の直後に設けられ、前記走行する長尺状 支持体の乾燥される塗布膜面を囲む乾燥ゾーンを形成す る乾燥装置本体と、前記乾燥ゾーン内に前記長尺状支持 体幅方向の一方端側から他方端側に流れる一方向流れの 乾燥風を発生させる一方向気流発生手段と、を備えたこ とを特徴とする。

【0012】本発明によれば、塗布後、好ましくは塗布 直後に乾燥ゾーンを設けたことで、乾燥ゾーン外からの 強さや方向の不均一な風が、有機溶剤を多く含み塗布液 が流動し易い状態の塗布膜面に当たらないようにできる と共に、塗布膜面から蒸発した有機溶剤が塗布膜面を覆 う乾燥環境が形成される。との乾燥環境下で、長尺状支 持体幅方向の一方端から他方端に流れる1方向流れの規 則的な乾燥風を発生させると、塗布膜面近傍の有機溶剤 **濃度を常に一定に維持した状態で塗布膜の乾燥を行なう** ことができるので、乾燥時における上記した2種類の斑

できる。

[0013]

【発明の実施の形態】以下、添付図面により本発明の塗 布膜の乾燥方法及び装置の好ましい実施の形態について 詳説する。

【0014】図1は、本発明の塗布膜の乾燥装置の側面 図であり、また、図2は図1を上方から見た平面図であ

【0015】図1及び図2に示すように本発明の塗布膜 の乾燥装置10は、主として、走行する長尺状支持体1 2 (以下、「ウエブ12」と言う)を通過させて塗布膜 の乾燥が行なわれる乾燥ゾーン14を形成する乾燥装置 本体16と、乾燥ゾーン14内にウエブ12幅方向の一 方端側から他方端側に流れる一方向流れの乾燥風を発生 させる一方向気流発生手段18とで構成される。との乾 燥装置10は、走行するウエブ12に有機溶剤を含む塗 布液を塗布する塗布機20の直後に設けられる。

【0016】塗布機20としては、例えば、ワイヤーバ -20Aを備えたバー塗布装置を使用することができ、 複数のバックアップローラ22、24、26に支持され て走行するウエブ12の下面に塗布液が塗布されて塗布 膜が形成される。

【0017】乾燥装置本体16は、塗布機20の直後に 設けられ、走行するウエブ12の塗布膜面側(ウエブの 下面側)に沿った長四角な箱体状に形成され、箱体の各 辺のうちの塗布膜面側の辺 (箱体の上辺) が切除されて いる。これにより、走行するウエブ12の乾燥される塗 布膜面を囲む乾燥ゾーン14が形成される。乾燥ゾーン 14は、乾燥装置本体16を、ウエブ12の走行方向に 直交した複数の仕切板28、28…で仕切ることによ <u>り、複数の分割ゾーン14A、14B、14C、14</u> D、14E、14F、14G(本実施例では7つの分割 ゾーン)に分割される。この場合、乾燥ゾーン14を分 割する仕切板28の上端と、ウエブ12に形成された塗 布膜面との距離は、0.5mm~12mmの範囲が好ま しく、更に好ましくは1mm~10mmの範囲である。 また、乾燥ゾーン14には一方向気流発生手段18(図 2参照)が設けられる。

【0018】一方向気流発生手段18は、主として、乾 燥装置本体16の両側辺の一方側に形成された吸込口1 8A, 18B, 18C, 18D, 18E, 18F, 18 Gと、他方側に吸込口18A~18Gに対向して形成さ れた排気口18H、18I、18J、18K、18L、 18M、18Nと、排気口18H~18Nに接続された 排気手段18P、18Q、18R、18S、18T、1 8 U、18 Wとで構成される。これにより、排気手段1 8 P~18 Wを駆動させることにより、吸込□18 A~ 18 Gから分割ゾーン 14 A~ 14 Gに吸い込まれたエ アが排気口18H~18Nから排気されるので、各分割 (ムラ) の発生を防止でき、均一な乾燥を行なうことが 50 ゾーン14A~14Gには、ウエブ12幅方向の一方端

側(吸込口側)から他方端側(排気口側)に向けて一方向に流れる乾燥風が発生する。この一方向気流発生手段 18は、排気手段18P~18Wにより、分割ゾーン14A~14Gどとに個々に排気量を制御できるようになっている。吸込口18A~18Gから吸い込まれる乾燥風としては、温度・湿度が空調された空調風が好ましい。

【0019】また、乾燥装置本体16の幅はウエブ12 の幅よりも大きくなるように形成して、乾燥ゾーン14 の両側の開放部分を整風板32で蓋をした整風部分を設 10 けるようにした。この整風部分は、吸込口18A~18 Gから塗布膜端までの距離と、塗布膜端から排気口18 H~18Nまでの距離を確保すると共に、乾燥風が吸込 □18A~18Gのみから乾燥ゾーン14内に吸い込ま れ易くするもので、乾燥ゾーン14に急激な乾燥風の流 れを作らないようにしたものである。この整風部分、即 ち整風板32の長さとしては、吸込口側及び排気口側と もに、50mm以上150mm以下の範囲が好ましい。 【0020】各分割ゾーン14A~14Gのうち、特に 塗布機に一番近い分割ゾーン14Aは、ウエブ12に塗 20 布液が塗布された直後に、乾燥ゾーン14外の新鮮な空 気、例えば上記した空調風が乾燥ゾーン14に入り込み にくくすることが重要である。この為には、塗布機20 に隣接するように分割ゾーン14Aを配置することや前 記した整風板32の他に、塗布機20のワイヤーバー2 0 Aの位置と、バックアップローラ2 4の位置を調整 し、ウエブ12が分割ゾーン14Aの直近を走行するよ うにして、ウエブ12で分割ゾーン14Aの開放部をあ たかも蓋をするように構成することが好ましい。

【0021】また、ウエブ12を挟んで、乾燥装置本体16の反対側位置には、前記空調風等の風により、ウエブ12の安定走行が阻害されないように遮蔽板34が設けられる。

【0022】次に、上記の如く構成された乾燥装置10 の作用を説明する。

【0023】尚、ウエブ12は、予め塗布された配向膜 形成用樹脂をラピング処理して配向膜となる層を有する ものであると共に、塗布液は液晶性ディスコティック化 合物を含む有機溶剤性塗布液の例で説明する。

【0024】バックアップローラ22、24、26に支 40 持され走行するウエブ12に塗布機20のワイヤーバー20Aで塗布液を塗布した直後、乾燥装置10によって塗布膜面の初期乾燥が行なわれる。この初期乾燥は、塗布直後、遅くとも5秒以内の塗布直後に乾燥風による乾燥を開始することが好ましい。

【0025】との初期乾燥において、塗布直後の塗布膜面は有機溶剤が十分に含まれた状態にあり、特に有機溶剤を溶媒とする塗布液を塗布した直後の初期乾燥では有機溶剤の蒸発の分布(ゆらぎ)によって塗布膜面に温度分布が発生する。これが原因で表面張力の分布が発生

し、塗布膜面内で塗布液の流動が起き、乾燥の遅い部分の塗布膜が薄くなり、ブロードな斑(ムラ)Aとなる。 【0026】また、液晶性ディスコティック化合物の配向方向は、配向膜形成用樹脂の表面をラピング処理して決めているが、初期乾燥においてラピング方向と異なる風向きの風速が速い場合、風が合流する場合、風の渦が発生している場合等の風が塗布膜面に当たることで塗布膜面の一部に配向方向のずれを生じさせ、これがシャープな斑(ムラ)Bの原因となる。

【0027】とのことから、初期乾燥時における塗布膜面の斑(ムラ)A、Bを防止するためには、塗布してから塗布膜面における塗膜液の流動が停止するまでの初期乾燥の間、外部からの不均一な風が塗布膜面に当たるのを阻止すると共に、塗布膜面近傍の有機溶剤濃度を常に一定に保つことが重要になる。

【0028】そこで、本発明では、ウエブ12に塗布液を塗布した直後、初期乾燥を行なうために上記構成の乾燥装置10を設けた。即ち、塗布直後に乾燥ゾーン14を形成したことで、乾燥ゾーン14外の強さや方向の不均一な風が、有機溶剤を多く含み塗布液が流動し易い状態の塗布膜面に当たらないようにできる。これにより、塗布膜面に当たった風の勢いで塗布膜面の配向方向がずれることが原因で発生するシャーブな斑(ムラ)Bを防止し、均一な乾燥を行なうことができる。

【0029】また、乾燥ゾーン14を設けたことで、塗 布膜面から蒸発した有機溶剤が塗布膜面を覆う乾燥環境 が形成される。この乾燥環境下で、排気手段18P~1 8Wを駆動させると、吸込□18A~18Gから分割ゾ ーン14A~14Gに吸い込まれたエアが排気口18H ~18 Nから排気されるので、各分割ゾーン 14 A~1 4 Gには、ウエブ幅方向の一方端側(吸込口側)から他 方端側(排気口側)に向けて一方向に流れる乾燥風が発 生する。これにより、塗布膜面が有機溶剤で覆われた状 態のまま、蒸発した有機溶剤を含む乾燥エアが排気🗌 1 8H~18Nから排気されて次第に乾燥される。この場 合、排気手段18P~18Wの排気量が大き過ぎると、 塗布膜面を有機溶剤が均等に覆わなくなるので、排気手 段18P~18♥の排気量を調整して、排気量が大きく なりすぎないようにする必要がある。これにより、塗布 膜面近傍における有機溶剤濃度を均等にできるので、塗 布膜面の各部分から有機溶剤を均等に蒸発させることが できる。従って、塗布膜面からの有機溶剤の蒸発分布が 原因で発生するブロードな斑(ムラ)Aを防止し、均一 な乾燥を行なうことができる。

【0030】この場合、ウエブ12が乾燥ゾーン14を 走行することで、乾燥ゾーン14の入口側と出口側にお ける塗布膜面近傍の有機溶剤濃度が異なる場合がある が、乾燥ゾーン14を、複数の分割ゾーン14A~14 Gに分割したことで解消することができる。即ち、7分 50 割された各分割ゾーン14A~14Gに設けた各排気手

30

段18P~18Wの排気量を制御して、各分割ゾーン14A~14Gを流れる乾燥風の風速を調整することにより、乾燥ゾーン14の入口側と出口側における塗布膜面近傍の有機溶剤濃度の異なりを解消することができる。これにより、塗布膜面には、ブロードな斑(ムラ)Aもシャープな斑(ムラ)Bもともに発生しない良好な乾燥を行なうことができる。

【0031】更に、乾燥風の流れをコントロールするた めに仕切板28の上端と塗布膜面との間隔を0.5mm ~12mmとし、塗布膜面が仕切板28に当たらない範 10 囲においてできるだけ狭くすることにより各分割ゾーン 14A~14Gに設けた各排気手段18P~18Wの個 々の排気精度をアップさせることができる。また、乾燥 ゾーン14の両側部のウエブの下に整風板32を設けて 吸込口18A~18Gから流入してくる風、及び排気口 18 H~18 Nから排気される風を整流することで塗布 膜面を流れる溶剤を含んだ風の流れが一様になるように した。尚、乾燥風としては、乾燥装置10が設置され た、例えば空調室等の空調風を使用することができる が、塗布液に含有される有機溶剤と同じ溶剤を含む風 を、乾燥装置本体16の吸込口18A~18Gから吸い 込ませるようにしてもよい。或いは、排気手段18P~ 18 Wにより排気される乾燥風の一部を吸込□18 A ~ 18Gから吸い込ませてもよい。

【0032】本発明で使用されるウエブ12としては、 一般に幅0.3~5m、長さ45~10000m、厚さ 5~200 μmのポリエチレンテレフタレート、ポリエ チレン-2,6ナフタレート、セルロースダイアセテー ト、セルローストリアセテート、セルロースアセテート プロピオネート、ポリ塩化ビニル、ポリ塩化ビニリデ ン、ポリカーボネート、ポリイミド、ポリアミド等のプ ラスチックフィルム、紙、ポリエチレン、ポリプロピレ ン、エチレンブテン共重合体等の炭素数が2~10のα - ポリオレフィン類を塗布又はラミネートした紙、アル ミニウム、銅、錫等の金属箔等、或いは帯状基材の表面 に予備的な加工層を形成させたものが含まれる。 更に、 前記したウエブ12には、光学補償シート塗布液、磁性 塗布液、写真感光性塗布液、表面保護、帯電防止あるい は滑性用塗布液等がその表面に塗布され、乾燥された 後、所望する長さ及び幅に裁断されるものも含まれ、と れらの代表例としては、光学補償シート、各種写真フィ ルム、印画紙、磁気テープ等が挙げられる。

【0033】塗布液の塗布方法として、上記したバーコーティング法の他、カーテンコーティング法、エクストルージョンコーティング法、ロールコーティング法、印刷コーティング法、スプレーコーティング法及びスライドコーティング法を使用することができる。特にバーコーティング法、エクストルージョンコーティング法、スライドコーティング法が好適に使用できる。

【0034】また、本発明において同時に塗布される塗布液の塗布層の数は単層に限定されるものではなく、必要に応じて同時多層塗布方法にも適用できる。

[0035]

【実施例】図3は、光学補償シートの製造工程に、本発明の乾燥装置10を組み込んだものであり、乾燥装置10の各排気手段18P~18Wの排気量を調整した場合の効果を、製造された光学補償シートの斑(ムラ)の発生状況との関係で調べた。

0 【0036】乾燥装置10の各排気手段18P~18Wの排気量については、表1の1~3の3実施例について行い、各実施例において各分割ゾーン14A~14Gを流れる乾燥風の風速を表1に示した。

【0037】先ず、光学補償シートの製造工程について説明すると、図3のように送出機40で送り出されたウェブ12は複数のガイドローラ42、42…によって支持されながらラビング処理装置44、塗布機20そして、初期乾燥を行なう本発明の乾燥装置10、本乾燥を行なう乾燥ゾーン46、加熱ゾーン48、紫外線ランプ50を通過して巻取機52で巻き取られる。

【0038】ウエブ12としては、厚さ100 μ mのトリアセチルセルロース(フジタック、富士写真フイルム(株)製)を使用した。そして、ウエブ12の表面に、長鎖アルキル変性ポパール(MP-203、クラレ(株)製)の2重量パーセント溶液をフィルム1 m^2 当り25m1塗布後、60° Cで1分間乾燥させて造られた配向膜用樹脂層を形成したウエブ12を、18m/分で搬送走行させながら、樹脂層表面にラビング処理を行って配向膜を形成した。ラビング処理におけるラビングローラ54の押しつけ圧力は、配向膜樹脂層の1cm²当たり98Pa(10kgf/cm²)とすると共に、回転周速を5.0m/秒とした。

【0039】そして、配向膜用樹脂層をラビング処理して得られた配向膜上に、塗布液としては、ディスコティック化合物TE-8の(3)とTE-8の(5)の重量比で4:1の混合物に、光重合開始剤(イルガキュア907、日本チバガイギー(株)製造)を前記混合物に対して1重量パーセント添加した混合物の40重量%メチルエチルケトン溶液とする液晶性化合物を含む塗布液を使用した。ウエブ12を走行速度18m/分で走行させながら、この塗布液を配向膜上に、塗布液量がウエブ1m²当り5m1になるようにワイヤーバー20Aで塗布した。そして、塗布直後に、本発明の乾燥装置10を使用して初期乾燥を行なった。

【0040】また、乾燥ソーン14を7分割する仕切板28の上端と塗布膜面との間隔は5~9mmの範囲に設定して行なった。また、本発明の乾燥装置10で初期乾燥されたウエブ12は、100°Cに調整された乾燥ソーン46及び、130°Cに調整された加熱ゾーン48を50 通過させてネマチック相を形成した後、この配向膜及び

液晶性化合物が塗布されたウエブ12を連続搬送しなが ら、液晶層の表面に紫外線ランプ50により紫外線を照 射した。

* 斑が発生したことを示し、〇は斑が発生しなかったことを示す。

[0042]

【0041】尚、表1の、斑の発生状況において、×は*

【表1】

条件	各分割ゾーンの乾燥風の風速(m/秒)						斑の発生状況		
177	14 A	14B	14C	14D	14E	14F	14G	プロード斑	シャープ斑
1	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	0. 5	×	0
2	1. 0	1.5	0, 5	0. 5	0. 5	0, 5	0. 5	0	0
3	1. 0	1.5	0, 5	0. 5	2.0	2. 0	2. 0	×	×

その結果、表1から分かるように、各分割ゾーンの風速を全て同じり、5m/秒とした実施例1では、ブロード斑Aが発生し、シャーブ斑Bは発生しなかった。また、塗布機20に近い分割ゾーン14Aの風速を1.0m/秒、次の分割ゾーン14Bの風速を1.5m/秒とし、それ以後の分割ゾーン14C~14Gの風速を0.5m/秒とした実施例2は、ブロード斑A及びシャーブ斑Bともに発生せず、良好な結果であった。また、分割ゾーン14Aの風速を1.0m/秒、次の分割ゾーン14Bの風速を1.5m/秒とし、分割ゾーン14C、Dの風速を0.5m/秒とし、分割ゾーン14E、F、Gとした実施例3は、ブロード斑A及びシャーブ斑Bともに発生し、最も悪い結果であった。

【0043】とのように、塗布直後に乾燥装置10を設 30 置すると共に、乾燥ゾーンを分割し個々の排気手段で最適風速に設定することは、初期乾燥過程で発生する斑(ムラ)を抑制するために効果的であることが分かった。

[0044]

【発明の効果】以上説明したように、本発明の塗布膜の 乾燥方法及び装置によれば、塗布直後の初期乾燥過程で※

※発生する斑(ムラ)を抑制でき、均一な乾燥ができる。 従って、従来のように、塗布液の粘度等の物性や溶媒の 種類を変更する必要がないので、使用できる塗布液の種 20 類の幅や溶剤の種類の幅を広げることができる。

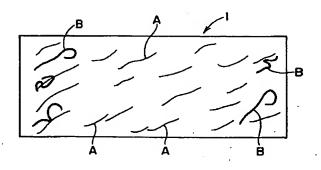
【図面の簡単な説明】

- 【図1】本発明の乾燥装置の側面図
- 【図2】本発明の乾燥装置の平面図
- 【図3】光学補償シートの製造工程に、本発明の乾燥装置を組み込んだ工程図
- 【図4】従来の乾燥方式で発生した斑(ムラ)発生状況 図
- 【図5】ブロードな斑(ムラ)を説明する説明図
 - 【図6】シャープな斑(ムラ)を説明する説明図

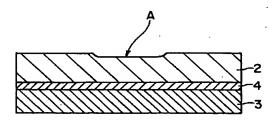
0 【符号の説明】

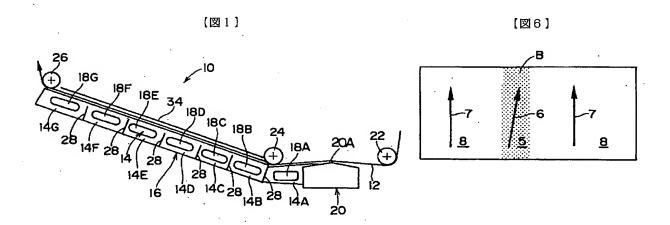
10…乾燥装置、12…ウエブ、14…乾燥ゾーン、14A~14G…分割ゾーン、16…乾燥装置本体、18m一方向気流発生手段、18A~18G…吸込口、18H~18N…排気口、18P~18W…排気手段、20…塗布機、22、24、26…バックアップローラ、28…仕切板、32…整風板、A…ブロードな斑、B…シャープな斑

【図4】

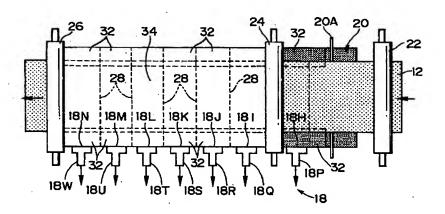


【図5】

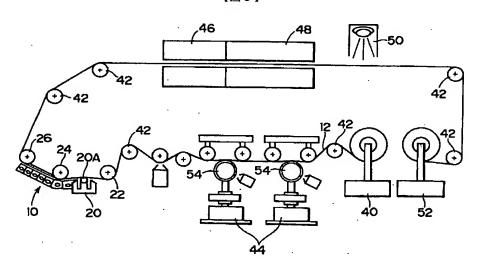




[図2]



【図3】



フロントページの続き

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"METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DRYING COATING FILM"

The following is an English translation of an extract of the above application.

It is an object of the present invention to uniformly dry a coating film without changing physical properties such as viscosity of a coating liquid and the type of a solvent.

A drying zone 14 is provided immediately after coating, a wind which is not uniform in intensity and direction from the drying zone 14 is prevented from directly hitting a surface of the coating film, and a drying environment in which an organic solvent evaporated from the surface of the coating film covers the surface of the coating film is provided. Further, under such drying environment, a regular dry wind of one direction flow flowing from one end of a width direction of a web 12 to the other end is generated in the drying zone 14.

A drying apparatus body 16 is provided close behind a coating unit 20, and formed in a rectangle box shape along the coating film surface side of the traveling web 12 (lower surface side of the web), side (the upside of the box) at the coating film surface side of each sides of the box is removed. Accordingly, the drying zone 14 surrounding of the coating film surface to be dried of the traveling web 12 is formed. The drying zone 14 divides off the drying apparatus body 16 by a plurality of partition panels 28 perpendicular to the traveling direction of the web 12, thereby to divide into a plurality of divided zones 14A, 14B, 14C, 14D, 14E, 14F, and 14G (seven divided zones in the present embodiment). In this case, the distance between the upper edge of the partition panel 28 and the coating film surface formed in the web 12 is preferably within the range of 0.5 mm to 12 mm, more preferably 1 mm to 10 mm. Further, an one direction air generating means 18 is provided in the drying zone 14 (cf. Fig. 2).